1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

Though the horse was not a primary source of food, stories and case histories reveal that horse meat was eaten on occasion and relished. In food-getting Comanche culture was basically a buffalo culture. [262]

As a beast of burden and as a means of personal transportation the horse had a fundamental value to the Comanche. In this respect the horse was a capital good. But the single individual could not effectively utilize more than a dozen horses in his personal string for use in war and hunting. [492]

Beyond this, horses were exceedingly acceptable as gifts and tokens of esteem. As gifts given in reciprocity for services rendered and as fees to medicine men, they served as an informal medium of exchange. As objects demandable in settlement of damage suits at law, they were a tangible form of material wealth endowed with legal and monetary significance. 431 422

In spite of all this, the great value of horses to the Comanche was a fiduciary value of inflated worth as prestige tokens, a value rooted in socio-psychological rather than economic factors. [554]

Though captured Mexican youths and children purchased from poverty-stricken Shoshone Indians served as herdsmen, and the increase of herds through selective breeding was practiced by the Comanches, the basic factor in the acquisition and retaining of a large herd was the military skill of the owners. Thus it is that the possession of horses figured in the prestige competition which so constantly and vigorously activated the life of the Comanche male. 233 556 [567]

The size of Comanche herds was immense. Probably no Indians were more richly supplied than they. Upon the count of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, the Antelope band alone surrendered one thousand five hundred horses to the United States at the time of the capitulation at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, on June 2, 1875.[17] A single Comanche, Big Fall By Tripping, is reputed among the Indians to have owned more than a thousand horses at one time.

The great communal hunts of the buffalo occurred during the summer months after the seasonal moulting was done and hides were in their prime. This was the season for the in-gathering of the bands. Sporadic and uncontrolled hunting of buffalo occurred whenever they were available during other seasons. 224

The time of the hunt was determined in democratic assembly at which everybody was welcome to listen, but in which the war leaders took the important part. The date for departure being set, the young and able-bodied men with their women left the main camp. Children and old persons remained behind. The expedition travelled light, taking very small and undecorated tipis and what weapons and tools were necessary.

[17] Commissioner of Indian Affairs (Annual Report, Washington, 1875), p. 273.

1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

574 224 special request for a certain animal before the active hunters rode into the slaughter.

Objects of material culture were personally owned; but the test of owner-
422 ship was not production so much as use. Clothing was prepared and made by the women, but owned by the person who wore it. A robe made by a woman for herself was hers, while a robe made for her son or husband belonged to that worthy. Tools and utensils used by the women belonged to the women and were also made by them. Every warrior carried his own kit of tools for the making of bows and arrows. This kit was an indispensable part of his personal equipment and was always carried fastened to his body, so that no matter what the emergency he was prepared to equip himself with weapons. Some older men specialized in arrow-making. They gave arrows to petitioners with or without consideration. Each man marked his own arrows with distinctive feathers or by some characteristic of production. Women made saddles for themselves and held them as their own
● [492] property. The man's saddle, which was of a slightly different style, was
[438] owned by the men. Among the Comanches they were made by Mexican
[72] captives who specialized in the trade for pay.

Medicine paraphernalia were made by the owner according to his vision
422 directions. If the help of others was needed, they received no pay other
424 than food. The medicine formula was privately owned, but could be trans-
438 ferred in consideration of payment, or given as gift, or inherited. The power itself, however, had to come through a dream as a confirmation of the efficacy of the transfer. War honors were another very distinct form of incorporeal property. These could be transferred as a gift of high esteem, as has been described. They were not, however, articles of trade in economic exchange.

The tipi, which was made, erected and moved by the woman, was not
422 586 hers by proprietary right. The decision as to its disposal belonged to the husband, though if generous and well-disposed towards her, he frequently gave it to the wife on separation.

Throughout the simple catalogue of goods we find that articles of per-
422 sonal use were usually personally owned according to the principle of effective utilization.

INHERITANCE

In the disposal of a deceased's property there is but one rule which stood
428 768 out with constancy: *upon the death of a person all effects of his (or her) personal usage were destroyed.* This included clothing, weapons, saddles, tools, paraphernalia, and horses customarily ridden by the deceased. According to Neighbors, "They also killed their favorite wives, but this custom has

1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

Neighbors observed that these helpers in grief "wailed a dead person until they received sufficient gifts from the man's relatives to stop. For instance," he continues, "if a man wants a favorite horse belonging to the brother of the deceased, he continues crying until he obtains it." Not only the deceased's estate, but the whole family property was drawn upon. If the death occurred in battle, then the demands of wailing and the value of gifts received were enlarged with the result that "from the liberality with which they dispose of their effects on all such occasions of the kind, it would induce the belief that they acquire property merely for the purpose of giving it to others."[6]

This is the picture of Comanche disposal of an estate as it appears to be. Actually, there were undoubtedly manifold deviations and variations towards either extreme. The patterns of disposal were nebulous and not well fixed.[7]

Nothing could better reveal the difficulty of evaluating the material which confronts us than the prevailing notions as to what happened in the disposal of the herd of horses belonging to A Big Fall By Tripping. On three points all the stories agree: he had waxed so fat that no horse could carry him, hence he was dragged from place to place on a good, strong travois; when he died he was too big to move to the mountains, so they dug a hole within his tipi and dumped him in; he left an estate of one thousand to fifteen hundred horses—all white. Concerning the settlement of the estate our four accounts diverge.

---

[6] Neighbors, *ibid.*, pp. 133–134.

[7] Professor Ralph Linton has acutely described the confusion and conflict in Comanche inheritance practices, laying emphasis upon the dynamics of cultural change. "... in 1870–1880 the practices of the Comanche with regard to inheritance were in a chaotic condition. There is good reason to believe that the whole problem of inheritance was new to the culture. The Plateau tribes from whom the Comanche had separated themselves when they entered the Plains were accustomed to destroy all a man's property at his death. This entailed few hardships and no serious economic loss, since property was limited to clothing and a few weapons and utensils. When the Comanche took over the Plains culture and acquired horses, inheritance became a real problem. Some individuals owned very large herds, in one case 2,000 animals. To slaughter the entire herd at the death of the owner was strongly against native sentiment and also prejudicial to the interests of the tribe. Since animals were freely loaned, several individuals might be dependent upon one man's herd for their mounts and would be seriously handicapped in hunting and war if these were killed. Stories indicate that there were some cases of wholesale killing during the early period, but by 1870 it had become customary to kill only a man's favorite horses and distribute the rest among the surviving relatives. No rules governing this distribution had been developed, with the result that there was usually hard feeling among the heirs." Linton, *The Study of Man*, pp. 297–298.

2: Lee T-5 (1855-1858) 1957
NO6 Comanche NO6

727 firmly lashed. In this situation it was possible for us to roll off sidewise if we pleased, but it was impossible to extricate ourselves from the beasts.

The caravan set forward in the following order: Our drove in advance, with outriders in front, and to the right and left, guarding it in the same manner we had previously; behind the drove rode the warriors, and in their rear came the pack mules, and the mules bearing the prisoners, without bridles, but left to follow at their own leisure and discretion. It is customary, not only with the Indians on such [492] occasions as this, but with Mexican and Texan drovers on a long march, to leave their pack mules free to follow, and never do they stray out of the line or linger many rods behind. Our position, bound as we were, however, was not comfortable. Utterly powerless, so far as guiding the animal was concerned, which, like the wind, wandered where it listed, sometimes pushing and crowding in among the pack mules, sometimes suddenly stopping to take a bite or two of grass, and in that natural and innocent act, throwing us forward on the pommel of the saddle with the impression we were going over his head, the next moment starting suddenly on a sharp trot, throwing us as far backward—our predicament was indeed awkward as it was tormenting. But these were only the light afflictions and trials of the prairie. When our journey came to lead us through strips of timber land, as it often did, then the measure of our tribulation was full, indeed. The first time the thoughtless brute ran under a limb, striking me in the face and knocking me off, or rather turning me round so that my head reversed positions with my feet, the sensation produced was horrible, but practice makes perfect is a true adage, and, in time, habituates a man to almost anything. My frequent repetitions of this performance on the *tightrope*

2: Lee T-5 (1855-1858) 1957
NO6 Comanche NO6

rectly opposite—but a mile below the bluff was another gravelly beach, almost precisely similar to the one at which we had arrived, and opposite that, and below us, was likewise a high bluff, so that in crossing, it was necessary to move in a diagonal direction, as well as a long distance. The usual labor was expended, and the usual means resorted to in passing the drove, which, in consequence of the low water extending from the opposite beaches, left only the main channel, a distance, perhaps, of a hundred yards, to be swum. When it came our turn to take passage, the blindfolds were removed, and each was seated in a little buffalo-skin boat, an invention original, I believe, with the Comanche tribes, and capable of being taken apart, folded into a small compass, and carried as baggage. To the bow of these boats were hitched one end of a hair rope, the other to the tails of our mules, who safely ferried us from shore to shore.

That night we encamped at the foot of the mountain, and the whole of the next day traveled, as near as I could judge, over a steep, rough, and uneven road. During the entire trip, I was subjected to the same annoyances of being run under trees, burned with hot horseflesh, and staked down at night, as described above.

Early in the afternoon of the fourth day the warriors raised the war whoop, and afar off was heard another war whoop in reply. As we advanced, over what appeared to me a smooth plain, the answering voices grew more and more distinct, until finally the approaching parties met and intermingled. Having halted, I was taken from the mule, and when allowed the liberty of my eyes, found myself and companions standing together, in the midst of a great number of tents, and surrounded by five or six hundred men, all pushing forward to catch a glimpse of us.

2: Lee T-5 (1855-1858) 1957
NO6 Comanche NO6

they believed, in truth, it was a living spirit in a silver body. 727

When I recounted all that had occurred since we last separated—my refusal to wind it—my obstinacy in resisting their commands, and my attack upon the Indian when unbound, he became still more convinced. The fact they had pursued such a course towards me, which they had not towards him, was perfect evidence in his mind they intended to naturalize me, and that, so long, at least, as the watch remained in order, I need not fear death at their hands. But he advised me, by all means, to pursue an entirely different course from that lately adopted; on the contrary, to leave no effort untried to initiate myself into their favor—to cultivate their good will—to yield submission in all things, and to deceive them, if possible, into the belief that I preferred to dwell with them rather than with my own people. By pursuing this course, he represented the time would come at last when their vigilance would relax, and an opportunity of escaping safely from them would occur. We conversed of many things, past, present, and to come, losing not a moment of the precious hour. At its close, he was ordered by the guard to leave. Charging me, if ever I escaped, to communicate the intelligence of his misfortunes to his friend, Antonio Ferandez, of Corpus Christi, he bade me a sorrowful *adieu*, and passed out of the tent. I have never seen or heard of him since.

Soon after this, early one morning, I discovered the 484 squaws busily engaged taking down the tents. One after 462 another the dingy white cones came down until the whole village looked as if some sudden tempest had laid it in ruins. Every canvas, buffalo mattress, and blanket was then rolled up, the cooking kettles and the tent poles collected, and all packed firmly on the backs of a crowd of mules [492] collected in the square. It was a busy and laborious scene,

requiring much strength to elevate some of the packages to their place, yet it was all performed by women.

The Comanche Indian in his village is the idlest, laziest being in existence, a sluggard and a glutton. His sole and only pursuits are war and hunting. His wife, besides attending to the domestic duties of the tent, plants his corn and reaps it, cultivates his tobacco, tans his buffalo hides—in fine, performs wholly, without the remotest aid from him, every particle and kind of labor, which, among civilized beings, devolves upon the husband. So now, while the women toiled and strained and lifted, the men moped stupidly around, smoking their pipes, or lolled upon the ground.

Everything in readiness, I was once more blindfolded, mounted, and tied, when the entire town, not only its men, women, and children, but its furniture, its tents, its public and private buildings, all moved off on the backs of mules and horses. There was not left one stone upon another of that city.

Fortunately, the mule upon which I rode was led, so that I escaped the annoyance that befell me, under similar circumstances, on a previous occasion. Being deprived of the use of my eyes on the journey, except when we encamped at night, I cannot give a description of the country over which we passed, further than to say we crossed over many mountains, and that it seemed to me a wild and barren region. At the end of three days, or three "sleeps," as a [805] Comanche would express it, we reached the end of the journey. Here I found myself in a small village, of not more than twenty or thirty tents, inhabited by what appeared to be a portion of Big Wolf's tribe, on the bank of a considerable river that flowed to the southwest, and in a valley much larger than any I have before described.

2: Lee T-5 (1855-1858) 1957
NO6 Comanche NO6

727 solemnly obligated himself, in case I did, to make a skele-
675 ton of me in the shortest possible space of time, according to the Indian statutes in such case made and provided.

727 Though closely observed, and confined within certain limits, like one out on bail in the old times of imprisonment for debt, I now enjoyed comparative freedom; and as day after day and week after week passed wearily away, had opportunities of observing their habits, customs, and peculiarities, and to become thoroughly conversant with life in a Comanche camp.

727 As before stated, the sole business of the male portion
701 of the tribe was war and hunting. While in camp the Indian is idle, listless, sleeping the greater part of the day and all night. He is slovenly in his dress, except when he meets in council or goes on the war path, when he decorates himself with the scalps he has taken, which at other
727 times hang in his tent. His prowess as a warrior is estimated
701 in proportion to the number he possesses.
554

The most renowned brave in the camp of the Big Wolf—he who could boast the possession of the greatest number of these trophies—was *Hawakakeno*, the Wide River. He was, indeed, a brawny and powerful savage, terrible in battle and quarrelsome in the village. He was feared as well as admired; his word was law among his weaker brethren, and none of all his tribe could stand before him in single contest.

224 To supply the necessaries of life, more or less are con-
492 strained daily to go out upon the hunt. In this, their only labor, they range within a circuit rarely extending more than four or five miles from the town. Their weapons, on these excursions, are the bow and arrow and the lance, both of which they use with great dexterity and skill, especially on horseback. Indeed, in the matter of horsemanship, I

Dressing the Buffalo Skin

doubt whether there is a race on the face of the whole earth that equals the Comanches. They will lie along the sides of their horses, while under full speed, directing their course at the same time and discharging arrows from under their necks with deadly effect, in a manner astonishing to witness.

If a deer is captured, he brings it in on his horse, throws it to the women whose business is to dress and cook it. If he kills a mustang or a buffalo, he rides into the village and informs his squaw where the carcass may be found, who straightway mounts and goes out in search of it—skins it —cuts the flesh into strips, and returns.

While the men are thus indolent, the women are remarkable for their industry. Besides attending to the menial duties of the camp, working in the fields during the planting and harvesting seasons, they perform extraordinary labors in preparing buffalo hides and bringing them into the soft and pliant condition in which we see them. To do this properly requires about six weeks, and the process may be new to many of my readers.

When the hide is first brought in green, it is placed upon a log so hewed that it presents a flat surface, perhaps a foot in width. With an instrument similar to a common adze, the squaws cut away all the flesh and part of the bulkiest portions of the hide, until the whole presents a uniform thickness. This is a long and tedious operation. They are then stretched upon frames, and rubbed with a kind of pumice stone until the surface becomes furzy. If it should dry in this state, however, it would be hard, stiff and unpliant. To avoid this, they use a preparation composed of basswood bark pounded very fine and mixed with the brains of the deer or buffalo, which is applied day after day until the skin is thoroughly saturated, when it is soft and flexible.

2: Lee T-5 (1855-1858) 1957
NO6 Comanche NO6

XIII

The journey beyond the mountains—Capturing a bear—The night encampment—Entrance into the valley of Lescoha—The dashing escort—Camp of the Spotted Leopard—Another war dance—No change of programme—The bargain and sale—Renewal of the bloody covenant—Value of a captive—Arrival of Moko with the watch—Attempt to escape—Cutting the knee cord—Buffalo hunting—Battle with the Apaches—Meeting of Rolling Thunder and Spotted Leopard—Hanging by the heels—The arrival of the white women captives.

On this journey I was neither tied or blindfolded, but rode a bridled mule, while the warriors were mounted on their best horses. They usually kept me in advance of them, directing me when to turn to the right and left. We followed a well-beaten trail that led in a northwest direction. On reaching the head of the valley, we turned to the left, and began the ascent of a wide, low range of mountains, winding in and out of narrow passes and defiles, but still gradually ascending, traveling in this manner some twenty miles before reaching the summit. The descent on the opposite side was of equal extent.

The ravines were overgrown with dwarfish trees, and the adjacent mountains in general were rocky, but occasionally between the ridges that rose in succession one above the other were small, level plats, covered with a heavy growth of grass, upon which buffalo, deer, and antelopes were feeding.

727 first carried away into captivity. This, I supposed, was the extent of the penalty I was doomed to suffer, but a short time taught me I was sorely and painfully mistaken. The Spotted Leopard, drawing down my leggin, with the coolness of the most practised surgeon, drew the edge of his knife across the cartilage or tendon just below the kneepan of my right leg. The muscle was not entirely severed, as was evidently his intention. The object of this surgical operation was to cripple me in such manner as to render escape impossible, even should a favorable opportunity present itself. For two weeks I was kept tied down, the chief frequently, during that time, bending the leg back and forth, each time breaking open the wound afresh. Eventually, however, I was unbound, and the wound permitted to heal, leaving a formidable cicatrice, and rendering the limb extremely stiff, not to such a degree, however, as it was his purpose to make it.

224 In the winter following, some 250 of the warriors, armed
727 with bows and arrows, lances, tomahawks, and knives, set
● 492 out on their annual grand buffalo hunt. They were mounted on their choice horses, while I, who accompanied the chief as his servant, rode, unarmed, a dilapidated mule.

224 It is only in the cold months that the skin of the buffalo has any value for the purposes of traffic. Then, only, is it covered with wool, being, in the warm summer weather, with the exception of a tuft of mane, entirely bare. During the latter period they are only killed as the necessity of food requires—their skins then being used for the construction of tents.

224 On these annual excursions, they are followed by a large
492 number of mules that not only carry out their buffalo-hunting tents, which simply consist of one or more skins,

2: Lee T-5 (1855-1858) 1957
NO6 Comanche NO6

thrown over a pole resting on crossed stakes—but also bring back the hides they may succeed in taking.

On the occasion I now refer to, the party moved west, threading their winding way over the mountains, and across numerous streams and valleys of greater or less width and extent. In the afternoon of the third day we struck a wide, rolling prairie. Dividing it nearly in the center was a high, smooth ridge—its summit reached from both sides by an easy, gradual ascent. As we crossed the prairie and approached this ridge, our scattered cavalcade extended, perhaps, a quarter of a mile, moving forward carelessly, and in no order whatever. I was at the extreme rear, by the side of the Spotted Leopard, and surrounded by the pack mules. As the foremost horsemen reached the height, they halted suddenly, making hurried signs, while two or three of the braves galloped back down the slope, riding eagerly to and fro among their brethren, as if urging them to push forward without delay. The whole band, thereupon, dashed up the hill, except the Spotted Leopard and myself, who remained with the mules in the rear, and on reaching the summit deployed into line. By this time I had heard the cry of "the Apaches, the Apaches," and knew at once there was hot work at hand.

As yet, however, I had seen nothing of an enemy, and only drew the inference there was one present from the cries I had heard, and the general commotion that prevailed. In the course of two or three minutes after our line formed on the ridge, the air was rent with the noise of the war whoop, and up the opposite ascent, at full speed, came the Apaches in solid body, like a black cloud. As they approached, a shower of arrows were discharged from both lines, when they rushed upon each other in a hand-to-hand encounter.

The Comanches

One end
484 of a tipi pole was tied on each side of a horse or a mule and the other
492 end allowed to drag. This formed the travois on which the family belongings were piled until it was hardly possible to see the back of the animal bearing the burden. Children too large to be carried on their mothers' backs but too small to ride alone were tied on some old horse to be led or herded along with the procession. As an improvised
[758] ambulance for the wounded or ill, a buffalo skin was stretched between the poles of the travois, forming a sort of bed upon which the invalid was fastened for the journey. It frequently happened that some of the pack animals became frightened and scattered their burdens for miles over the prairie. Men and boys divided their time along the route between hunting and driving the remuda as they moved across a land they claimed as their own—Comanchería.

3:Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

These forces brought about an immediate and sweeping change in the life of the Comanches that was even more drastic than in the case of most other Indians. Walter Prescott Webb does not exaggerate in his claim that "Steam, electricity, and gasoline have wrought no greater changes in our culture than did horses in the culture of the Plains Indians."[2] With the horse, the Comanche achieved incomparably greater mobility; he mastered the buffalo; he had an exchangeable asset that made him a greater trader; he was transformed from an impotent infantryman into a fierce cavalryman—a dangerous warrior and insatiable raider. As a beast of burden and as a means of personal transportation, the horse had a fundamental value to the Comanche. It enabled the hunter to provide plenty of food, clothing, and shelter for his dependents, the raider to take more plunder, and the warrior to take more enemy scalps with less danger to himself. His life became exuberant, his culture efflorescent.

The Comanche had not been devoid entirely of a beast of burden for use in transportation previous to the acquisition of the horse. He had used the dog to draw his travois, as we have already seen. But his movable goods when toted by dogs were meager and his household poorly furnished. After obtaining the larger animal, he merely enlarged his dog harness, lengthened the travois poles, and "as an indication of appreciation of the boon which had been conferred upon him, named the horse the God-dog."[3] But the difference in the load that could be moved and the distance that could be covered as a result of the change increased considerably the area from which the Comanche could draw sustenance and the load of household appurtenances he could move about in his wanderings.

The horse had other practical advantages over the dog. It could eat grass and even the bark of trees. In the lush plains of the past it was easier to feed in large numbers than was the dog. Furthermore, its flesh could be eaten in times of food scarcity, while the dog, although nutritious, could not be eaten because of the coyote tabu. The skin of the horse provided shelter, robes, saddles, and rawhide thongs. The mane and tail were converted into ropes and bridles. The Comanche hunter was no longer compelled to stalk his game on foot.

[2] W. P. Webb, *The Texas Rangers: A Conflict of Civilization*, 13.
[3] *Ibid.*

3:Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

into the timbered area. The Shoshones of Idaho had obtained their horses by the route west of the continental divide about 1690 to 1700, or approximately twenty years before horses had reached the junction of the Kansas and Missouri rivers.

Ponca tradition credits the Comanches with having the first horses seen by the people of their tribe. According to it, the Comanches at the time fought on horseback, using the long-handled stone battle-axe as their principal weapon. Furthermore, the Poncas claim that the Comanches had thick covers of overlapping pieces of rawhide to protect the breasts and sides of their animals. The Comanches taught the Poncas how to ride and to use the horse as a beast of burden. Soon afterwards they left the country, and the Poncas knew not where they went.[8]

The Comanches probably acquired horses as early as, or before, the Shoshones. They certainly had them by the time they moved into the South Plains. They were raiding in New Mexico in 1705. The next year, the Apaches in the northeastern part of that province suffered from Comanche horse-raiding expeditions. Comanche raiding in New Mexico apparently became progressively more frequent, for in 1719 the governor of the province sent a punitive expedition against the Comanches in an attempt to check the forays.

How many horses the Comanches accumulated is impossible to estimate with any degree of accuracy. Probably no Indians were more richly supplied than they. Clinton Smith reported that his band had about 6,000 head, about one-half of which were the property of the chief; and that sometimes within a single night horses by the thousands were captured or stolen.[9] Captain Marcy estimated that the most successful warriors owned from fifty to two hundred animals each. By comparison, a Sioux considered himself wealthy if he owned thirty to forty.[10] The Antelope band, with a population of less than two thousand, had about 15,000 horses and 300 to 400 head of mules in 1867. Modern Comanches say that A Big Fall By Tripping owned 1,500 horses at the time of his death, although he was so fat he could not ride a single one, but had to travel sitting on a travois.

[8] Alice C. Fletcher and Frances La Flesche, "The Omaha Tribe," B. A. E. *Bulletin No. 27*, 79–80.

[9] Clinton and Jeff D. Smith, *The Boy Captives*, 50–51.

[10] Maximilian, Prince of Wied, *Travels in the Interior of America* (vol. I of Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*), 160.

3:Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

The Horse and the Buffalo

Of all the techniques of taking mustangs, one of the easiest was 224
to ambush them at the water hole. It was the habit of the wild horses to feed as much as ten or more miles out on the prairie from the nearest water. They would munch on the grass until thirsty. Then they would run the whole distance to the nearest hole. Hot and thirsty, they guzzled their bellies full. The Comanche, mounted on a good, rested horse, could dart from his ambush and quickly take a water-logged mustang which he could not even have approached a few minutes earlier.[16]

In capturing the hard-to-take stallions, however, the best way was to stalk them with a team of co-operating hunters. Each herd tended to move about within a limited range of territory; when flushed, it was likely to travel in a circle, returning eventually to or near the spot where it was originally found. To accomplish this end, one or more horsemen kept the herd continuously on the move without allowing it either to eat or to drink. This was not too difficult, for the stalkers, by remaining on the inside of the circle, traveled a much shorter distance than the herd. When their own mounts wearied, the riders were replaced by others or were supplied with fresh mounts. This procedure was continued without let-up for two or three days or until the herd became exhausted, when a number of riders on fresh mounts rode in and lassoed their pick of the wild horses.

To catch a wild horse is only half the job—if a man intends to 492
ride him. There is yet the breaking to be done. The mustang was choked into exhaustion, thrown to the ground, and subjected to having the breath of the captor blown into its nostrils. The "wild" hairs were pulled from around its eyes. A headstall or hackamore, a loop of rope about the under jaw brought up and tied about the neck with a knot that would not slip, was put on the animal.[17] The captive was usually tied to a gentle mare in such a way as to keep it from injuring the mare during its first efforts to escape. While the horse was still tied to the mare, the owner handled it enough to make it gentle. After a few days it was set free, and thereafter followed the mare wherever she went. When the time came to ride his wild mustang,

[16] Noah Smithwick, *The Evolution of a State*, 187.

[17] C. and J. D. Smith, *op. cit.*, 67; Baldwin Möllhausen, *Diary of a Journey from the Mississippi to the Pacific with a United States Government Expedition*, I, 186–87.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

492 the Comanche usually took it into a sand-bottomed creek or into deep water for his first mountings. This precaution took the bounce out of the bucking and made for softer landing.

721 Capturing wild horses had its points, but to the Comanche stealing them was better. And the Comanche was the top horse thief of them all. When he went raiding, it was sometimes for scalps, but usually he was more interested in plunder and horses than in killing.

Acquisition of horses by plunder appealed to a Comanche, for it enhanced his prestige. Taking horses under difficult conditions provided opportunity for valor and cleverness, and it was in its own right a form of coup: stealing horses from enemies was a distinguished mark of honor, and those most successful in this enterprise were highly respected. Captain Marcy reported that Is-sa-keep, a chief of one of the Northern Comanche bands, said that he was the father of four sons who were a great source of comfort to him in his old age for they could steal more horses than any other men in his band.[18] Some, like Rhoda Greyfoot's father and his two brothers, made it a point of honor never to return from a raid without horses.

The Comanche taking a guarded horse was a ghost. There are instances on record of Comanches' stealing hobbled and guarded mounts of soldiers. Colonel Dodge says that a Comanche could crawl into a "bivouac where a dozen men were sleeping, each with a horse tied to his wrist by the lariat, cut a rope within six feet of the sleeper, and get away with the horse without waking a soul." The Colonel also cites an instance of two Comanche raiders entering a stable under apparently impossible circumstances and making off with two of the best horses. The stable was built of heavy timbers set on end surmounted by a heavy plate doweled into place. The stable yard was enclosed by a heavy picket fence with similar dowel construction. Both yard and stable were guarded by sentries. Yet one stormy night the two Indians cut the dowels, removed enough timbers to permit a horse to go through, and made away with the two best animals without alarming either sentry. They were some sixty miles away before they were overtaken.[19]

[18] Marcy, *Adventure on Red River*, 159.
[19] R. I. Dodge, *The Plains of the Great West*, 401–402.

for "potato," each word indicating minutely determined combinations of potato qualities.[22]

Considering that 250 years ago the Comanches did not even know what a horse was, they very quickly built up a vocabulary for describing a horse on the basis of color. A horse was a brown (*ɖupsikᵘma*), a light bay (*ohaieka*), a reddish brown (*ɛkakoma*), a black (*ɖuukᵘma*), a white (*ʈɔsa*), a blue (*epixtuesi*), a dun (*maana*), a sorrel (*ɔtɛkᵘma*), or a roan, either red (*ekaesi*) or yellow (*ohaesi*). Then there was the *dunnia*, a yellow horse with black mane and tail. Pintos were red (*ɛkasɔnaco*), sorrel (*ɔdutsɔnaro*), or black (*ɖuu:tsɔnaro*). And finally there were the red (*ɛkanaki*), yellow (*ohanaki*), and black (*ɖuunaki*) ears.

Most war ponies and race horses had personal names, while the ruck of a man's herd did not. A Comanche warrior would never be caught riding a mare if he could help it—they were for women and children—and under no circumstances would he ride a mare into battle. And while teen-agers might ride mares, a boy or girl dressed up for "show off" considered mares déclassé; only a sharp horse would do.

Riding horses were almost always gelded, for the Comanches became real pastoralists who knew how to breed up their stock. This drew from T. A. Dodge, U.S.A., the following comment: "In one particular the Comanche is noteworthy. He knows more about horses and horse-breeding than any other Indian. He is particularly wedded to and apt to ride a pinto ('painted' or piebald) horse, and never keeps any but a pinto stallion. He chooses his ponies well, and shows more good sense in breeding than one would give him credit for. The corollary to this is that the Comanche is far less cruel to his beasts, and though he begins to use them as yearlings, the ponies often last through many years."[23]

Only a few choice stallions were permitted to breed the mares. All others were castrated when about two years of age. The Comanche technique was to rope the forelegs, throw the stallion, and tie his front

[22] W. La Barre, "Potato Taxonomy of the Aymara Indians of Bolivia," *Acta Americana*, Vol. V (1947), 83–102.

[23] T. A. Dodge, "Some American Riders," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, May, 1891, 862.

3:Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945)1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

feet to a post. Two men grabbed the hind legs, and the operator sat between the legs to do his cutting.[24]

Comanche horses were not ordinarily shod, but a man's favorite horse, if tenderfooted, was fitted with a rawhide boot soaked in water and tied over the sore hoofs.[25] Other riding horses had their hoofs toughened by walking them slowly back and forth near the heat and smoke of a fire.[26]

Among the Comanches, horses were private property. Each member of a family who was large enough to ride had one or more mounts of his own. The young child was usually given an old, gentle mare. The women had their riding mounts as well as mules and gentle horses for packing. Large numbers of mules were frequently found in the Comanche camps around the middle of the nineteenth century. Captives, before they were adopted into the tribe, were also forced to ride mules to lessen the danger of a break for freedom.

Josiah Gregg was of the opinion that the Comanches had a universal custom of marking their animals by a slit in the tip of each ear.[27] Contemporary Comanches deny this, however, saying that any Comanche could distinguish one horse from another by looks just as easily as he could tell one person from another. After all, the Comanches lived with their horses.

Most accounts by early explorers on the plains agree that the Comanches were among the best horsemen the world has produced. Baldwin Möllhausen, a German scientist and traveler who crossed the Southern Plains in 1853, observed that from earliest childhood to the last days of his life the Comanche was continually on horseback. "Indeed, he makes but an awkward figure enough on foot, though he is no sooner mounted than he is transformed; and when with no other aid than that of the rein and heavy whip he makes his horse perform the most incredible feats," which gave him a feeling of independence and superiority.[28] Marcy stated that it was while the Co-

[24] Informant: Post Oak Jim.

[25] Informant: Slope.

[26] H. H. Bancroft, *The Native Races*, I, 518, n.136; Parker, *op cit.*, 203.

[27] Josiah Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, 433.

[28] Möllhausen, *op. cit.*, I, 184.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

492 manche was mounted that he exhibited himself to best advantage. "Here he is at home and his skill . . . is truly astonishing."[29]

492 726 868 One of the first things a Comanche child learned was to ride. He started riding in a pack on his mother's back long before he could walk. Next he was strapped to her saddle on a gentle mare. By the time he was four or five he was off on a pony of his own. Both boys and girls were taught to ride with or without a saddle. Girls were taught to ride astride and became almost as much at home on horseback as boys. But it was not enough for the Comanche boy merely to learn to ride. He had to be a trick rider. Day after day, month after month, he practiced in drill. He learned to pick up objects from the ground while his mount was traveling at full speed. At first, small and light objects were selected, but as the boy grew older and more proficient, heavier and more bulky objects were exchanged for the lighter ones, until at last, unassisted and at full speed, he might be able to pick up from the ground and swing across his horse the body of the heaviest man. To rescue a fallen comrade was the highest obligation of any Comanche warrior. To leave a comrade on the field to be stripped, mutilated, and scalped by desecrating enemies was a disgrace to The People. Every man was expected to be able to meet the challenge when the need arose—and he had to be able to do it alone. Generally, however, rescues were made by two men working togther. Rushing neck by neck on either side of the prostrate person, both riders stooped at the same instant and swung the body in front of one of the riders. This stunt was practiced over and over on all kinds of ground until riders and ponies could do it without a hitch.

491 726 In attack, the Comanche, like other horse Indians, made his mount a mobile shield between himself and his enemy. How many a trooper or pioneer within his defensive corral of wagons has cursed at the scudding Indian whirling about him, loosing arrows from beneath his horse's neck, with nothing showing but a leg hooked over the horse's backbone! The key to this fancy trick was a loop of rope attached to the cantle or, if the rider was bareback, plaited into his steed's mane. With the loop slipped over his head and under his outside arm, a trained rider (and what Comanche was not?) clung to

[29] R. B. Marcy, *Exploration of the Red River of Louisiana in the Year 1852*, 32 Cong., 2 sess., *Sen. Exec. Doc. 54*, 103.

3:Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933,1945)1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

492 [126]

the side of his horse with both hands free for shooting or picking up heavy objects while riding hell bent for leather.[30]

Thus it was that Homer Thrall imaginatively saw the Comanche as "the Arab of the Prairie—the model of the fabled Thessalian 'Centaur,' half horse, half man, so closely joined and so dexterously managed that it appears but one animal, fleet and furious."[31]

492 525

Long before they got horses, the Comanches, like their Shoshone cousins, liked to put a good bet on a stick game or an arrow-throwing contest. Small wonder that in later years they took to horse racing with gusto and mighty bets.

In one popular race the contestants started from a line and rushed full speed toward a tree, the one touching it first being the winner. In another they rushed at a pole resting horizontally about six feet from the ground. If a rider stopped his horse a moment too soon, he failed to touch the pole; if a moment too late, the horse passed under the pole, possibly leaving the rider dangling to the pole or thrown to the ground. In still another contest, two strips of buffalo hide were stretched across the track about six to ten feet apart. The starting point was about two hundred yards from the strips. The contestants jumped their mounts over the first strip, reversed their direction, and raced back to the starting point. The horse which failed to get beyond the first strip with all four feet or which went beyond the second lost the race regardless.

Most Comanche racers were "doctored" for a race. An owner had a medicine man chew up some unidentified medicine which he spit in the horse's mouth or ear. Whatever its specific effect, it was power in the Comanche view. No woman could come near a racer when it had had medicine made for it, and after racing, both horse and rider went into a creek to wash off the effects of the medicine.

In many instances horse racing proved to be really profitable business for the Comanches—who were not the least loath to fleece a sucker. Colonel Dodge has left a story of a race which the officers at Fort Chadburne, Texas, to their regret arranged with some Comanches. After the first bets had been laid, the Comanches innocently

[30] R. I. Dodge, *The Plains of the Great West*, 331; Marcy, *Exploration of the Red River of Louisiana in the Year 1852*, 103.

[31] H. S. Thrall, *A Pictorial History of Texas*, 445.

The Comanches

brought forth a miserable-looking pony with a three-inch coat of thick hair and a general appearance of neglect and suffering. Its rider "looked big enough to carry the poor beast on his shoulders" and was armed with a club with which he belabored the animal from starting line to the finish. Yet, to the surprise of the whites the Indian pony managed to win by a neck. Within an hour the officers bit again and lost by a nose. Then they suggested a third race and brought out a magnificent Kentucky racing mare. In a frenzy of excitement the Indians bet everything that the whites would take. With the starting signal the Indian rider threw away his club, gave a whoop, and his little mount "went away like the wind." That Kentucky mare was soon so far behind that for the last fifty yards the Comanche sat backwards on his pony beckoning to the white rider to come on. The whites afterwards learned that the shaggy pony was a celebrated racer, and that the Comanches had just come back from fleecing the Kickapoos to the tune of six hundred ponies with that same little horse.[32]

Straight-run relay races from a standing start for a distance "ten times the distance you can shoot an arrow," or a good two miles, made a favorite run. Shorter obstacle races put both speed and control to a rigorous test.

To the Comanche, then, the horse was an intimate household friend, a beast of burden, a counter in the great prestige game of the warriors, a "gamer," and an occasional source of food. But it was to the buffalo that he turned for his economic mainstay.

The buffalo was as indispensable to the Comanche as the horse. No part of the slaughtered animal was wasted except the rump, spine, and skull. Hair, skin, flesh, blood, bones, entrails, horns, sinews, kidneys, liver, paunch, and the dried excrement were all utilized. The Indian ate its flesh, the marrow of its bones, the contents of the gall bladder on raw liver, and even at times its entrails—a habit left over from Shoshone days. Of the edible parts, only the heart was unconsumed; it was left for magical perpetuation of the herds.

When the Comanche was thirsty and water was not available, there was the blood of the buffalo. Its paunch, after the inner lining was removed, was used as a water bag and also as a container in which

[32] R. I. Dodge, *The Plains of the Great West*, 329–30.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

The Comanches

224 492 It was necessary to have well-trained horses, for the time of the slaughter was short. The first step in training a horse for buffalo running was to make him rope shy. This was done by twisting one end of a rawhide rope around the lower jaw, allowing the free end to trail. The trainer then mounted another pony and proceeded to prod the horse with whip, lance, or switch. For a short time, the horse, stepping on the halter rope, found it difficult to run. A few falls and hard jerks, however, were usually sufficient, and afterwards the horse very skillfully avoided stepping on any rope. Horses were trained also to run without bridle or rope of any kind, being guided by knee pressure.

224 Buffalo hunting, although hard work and dangerous, was truly exciting. When chasing buffalo, the Comanches, like other Indians, usually discarded all clothing except the breechclout. They rode bareback, although occasionally a small pad was used. Frequently a rope was wound in loose coils around the horse's body, just back of the forelegs; by thrusting his knees under the rope, the rider maintained a firm seat while in action. Each hunter rode upon the buffalo from the rear, coming in close on its right side and shooting at the soft spot between the protruding hip bone and the last rib. This was the only way to reach the vitals. The heart of the animal hung low, and since the rider was slightly behind and above the buffalo, the arrow slanted into the soft spot behind the short rib and ranged forward and downward. Driven with terrific force at such close range, the shaft often completely buried itself or passed all the way through the animal, even on occasion bringing down a second animal running alongside. A hunter sometimes pulled the arrow from the victim while the animal was still running. As soon as he heard the twang of the bow string, a good buffalo-running horse swerved away from its victim in order to be well out of harm's way when the wounded beast turned and charged. Unfortunately, the horse was not always quick enough to prevent being gored, and frequently a mount stepped in a prairie-dog hole, breaking its leg and throwing its rider. Many a hunter received broken limbs as a result of such accidents, and some were killed, but it was a risk taken with joy.[87]

[87] C. C. Rister, "Indians as Buffalo Hunters," *Frontier Times*, Vol. V (April, 1928), 456; Gregg, *op. cit.*, 361–62.

The Comanches

281 skins soft and flexible no matter how often they were exposed to moisture.

Every woman made the clothing for herself and her family, as was explained in the previous chapter. From the tanned skins the women also made various kinds of soft leather pouches, among them the long fringed ones for the men's smoking utensils. Some of these [531] bags were decorated with beadwork after the arrival of the white traders, but informants insist that porcupine-quill embroidery was unusual among the Comanches.

281 Although every woman learned to make clothing and bags, it
463 seems that there were only a relatively few who became expert at designing and cutting the cover for a tipi. A mother or wife who wanted to make a tipi gathered the poles, stripped them of their bark and pared them down to the desired size, and possibly pointed the butts. She then most likely went to an expert tipi-maker and asked for her help. She might offer her a present then, or it might be given afterwards. A day for the work was agreed upon. Other women would be invited to join the "quilting party," but the expert was in complete charge and gave the instructions. She usually did the most critical cutting and fitting. During the day the hostess provided her guests with a feast. Although the women worked together, there appears to have been no organization of tipi makers.[2]

492 Since the Comanches spent much of their time on horseback,
[463] horse equipage was an important item. Although both men and women worked at it, saddle-making tended to be the specialty of men
[727] who were no longer active in war. In later times, however, Mexican captives became specialists at the trade. Saddles were mostly of a modified Spanish type. They were generally made of American elm in three pieces: the bars or seat proper, the pommel, and the cantle. Each part was laboriously shaved down into the desired shape and carefully fitted. The pommel and cantle were made high with but slight pitch; the bars or seat were moderate in length so that the saddle was deep and narrow. Holes were drilled with a red hot awl, the joints daubed with glue, and then the parts were laced firmly together by means of green deer sinew. The joints were scraped and rubbed smooth, and the frame was smeared with an ochre paint. Over

[2] Informants: Kills Something; She Invites Her Relatives.

this frame wet rawhide of deer or buffalo was stretched and sewed with green deer sinew. As the wet rawhide dried, it shrank on the frame snugly, making a tough and durable saddle. A small, soft bear skin or buffalo robe was used as a pad.[3] Women's saddles were deeper than those of the men, and the horns and cantles had longer horizontal projections decorated with fringes and brass-headed tacks and were painted red.

The stirrup was usually made of a single piece of green willow wood. On either side of the foot rest the wood was bent up and the ends brought together to form the sides and top of the stirrup. The ends were lashed in place with wet sinew, and then over this wooden frame green buffalo hide was stretched and sewed together with sinew. When riding without saddles, the Comanches sometimes used a pad, usually made of dressed buffalo hide.

Bridles or halters were made of plaited buffalo hair or strips of tanned buffalo hide. The hair bridle seems to have been the most common. No bits were used. A loop was formed just above the horse's nose, and the animal was guided by a pull on the rein or by pressure of the knees.

Pack saddles were constructed of two large, ovaloid pads made of two pieces of rawhide sewed together with a grass stuffing between them. These fitted against the two sides of the horse and were held together by two strips of wood which arched over the horse's back and also served as a base for lashing the load. The two pads came so far down and fitted so snugly against the sides of the beast of burden that no cinch was needed.

The Comanches, like most Indians, enjoyed a good smoke. Post Oak Jim thinks there was no smoking in the old days, and he is probably right. At least, a few centuries ago the Comanches had access to very little tobacco. This was changed after they had contact with Mexican traders. From them they obtained cured tobacco in large leaves, which they themselves cut into long strips and pounded to shreds and then added crushed sumac leaves. They smoked both cigarettes and pipes. Cigarettes were rolled in cottonwood leaves or leaves of catbriar or blackjack oak. Only in more recent times were cornhusks introduced.

[3] Carter, *On the Border with MacKenzie*, 277, 296.

7: Richardson D-4 (no date) 1929
NO6 Comanche NO6
Wichita NO10

looking somewhat like a giant bee hive of the old fashion. They raised crops of corn, pumpkins and possibly tobacco. On the other hand the Apaches practiced agriculture only to a limited extent and commonly lived in crude brush lodges. Although they had but few arts their women were skilled basket makers.[6] In contradistinction to these other tribes, the Comanches, like their allies the Kiowas, never planted seed of any kind. Thus the Caddoan, Shoshonean, and Athapascan families have all been represented in the Abilene country at one time or another. It seems that the Wichitas and Apaches were here from time immemorial, but the Comanches were late comers. The stone artifacts we find in this country may have belonged to the Wichitas or Lipans; but it is not likely that any stone implement found here, excepting perhaps stone hammers and clubs, were ever used by the Comanches. Long before the latter tribe had reached this country, iron, steel, tin and copper had pretty well supplanted the stone and bone implements used by their forbears. Naturally this improvement in implements, together with the introduction of the horse worked some transformation among them; but we cannot follow this out because we know practically nothing of their culture before they came in touch with a higher civilization.

In physical appearance there was little to distinguish the Comanche from his fellow plains savages of other tribes. The artist Catlin described the race as "in statue rather low, and in person, often approaching to corpulency"; and stated that they were not as large and handsome as the Kiowas. He added that, "In their movements they were heavy and ungraceful; and on their feet one of the most unattractive and slovenly-looking races of Indians that I have ever seen." But the mounted Comanche presented an entirely different appearance. Once on his horse, he continued, "He gracefully flies away like a different being."[7] Some twenty years later, about 1854, Captain R. B. Marcy, of the United States Army, described the men as of "About the medium statue, with bright copper-colored complexions and intelligent countenances, in many instances with aquiline noses, thin lips, black eyes and hair, with but

6. For the picture of a Wichita village see George Catlin, **North American Indians, Being Letters and Notes on their Manners, Customs, and Conditions, written during eight years' travel amongst the wildest tribes of Indians in North America, 1832-1839** (Edinburg, 1926), II, plate 178. On the Apaches see Hodge, **Handbook**, I, 65-66.

7. **North American Indians**, II, 74 and 84.

7: Richardson D-4 (no date) 1929
NO6 Comanche NO6

undertaking. Generally the men did the killing while the women dressed the carcasses, loaded the meat on pack animals, took it to camp, and cooked it for immediate use or dried it as the occasion demanded. Some women were also hunters of recognized prowess.[17]

In seasons of plenty the squaws boned and split the meat, carved it into long chains, and threw it over poles to dry in the sun. Meat intended for immediate consumption was dried or cooked over a fire.

Naturally the Comanche women were adepts at tanning hides. The tanning of a deer skin is described thus:

> Having soaked the skins thoroughly, then throw them over a smooth log leaned against a tree at an angle, and then taking a rib of a deer in both hands, remove the hair by scraping it against the grain; they then stretched and dried them, when they became beautifully soft and white. To color them, they tied several into chimney shape, hung to a limb, and building smoulder fires under them they soon changed to a yellowish brown on the hair side, and light yellow on the flesh side.[18]

A somewhat different account is given by another observer. He states that:

> The skins were first staked down to the ground, flesh side up. With a sharp bone the squaw then scraped off every particle of flesh; next the scraped surface was spread with lime to absorb the grease, after which the surface was spread with the brains of the animal, rubbing it in and working it over till the skin became soft and pliable, the process requiring days and days of hard work.[19]

All authorities agree that the Comanches were unexcelled as horsemen. Catlin was amazed at their trick of dropping their body

17. In Notes Taken With Marcy, Parker tells of one woman, the widow of the Penateka chief, Santa Anna, who was said to have killed with her rifle as many as fifteen deer in one forenoon (pp. 192-193). Captain Marcy tells how he observed two young Comanche women of a northern band mount their horses and pursue and lasso each a young antelope which they brought back in triumph to the camp. Exploration of the Red River, 95.

18. Parker, Notes Taken with Marcy, 198-199.

19. Noah Smithwick, The Evolution of a State, Recollections of Old Texas Days, Compiled by his daughter, Nanna Smithwick Donaldson, Austin, Texas (not dated).

7: Richardson D-4 (no date) 1929
NO6 Comanche NO6

492 upon the side of the horse thus making of the animal a perfect screen between themselves and an imaginary enemy. "In this wonderful condition," he relates, "he will hang whilst his horse is at fullest speed, carrying with him his bow and his shield, and also long lance of fourteen feet in length, all or either of which he will wield upon his enemy as he passes; rising and throwing his arrows over the horses' back, or with equal ease and equal success under the horse's neck." Finally the artist learned that a partial explanation of the marvel was in the fact that a short hair halter was passed under the neck of the horse and both ends tightly braided into the mane on the withers. Through this loop the young warrier ran his arm and thus secured an anchor and rest for the fore part of his body.[20]

556 231 Horses were naturally the only form of wealth available to the Comanches. They were both useful and easily moved and an Indian's wealth was measured by the number of horses he possessed. Their horses were of good, indifferent or poor quality, depending on the success a given band had had in recruiting their scrubby mustang herds with better bred animals taken from the Mexican or Anglo-American frontier. With these Indians horse-stealing was both a science and an art and no warrior's training was complete until he was proficient in this respect. At the camp on the Clear Fork, in 1854, previously referred to, one warrior carried a shield [554 701] "Ornamented with a *human scalp*, a grizzly bear's claw and a mule's tail, significant of the brave warrior and successful hunter and horse-thief."[21] Chief Is-sa-keep, of a band of northern Comanches, once told Captain Marcy that his four sons were as fine young men as could be found, that they were a great comfort to him in his old age, "and could steal more horses than any other young men in his band."[22] The brave's best horse was always saved for the hunt or war party and the Indian had that love for their favorite steed that always characterizes good horsemen.

721 648 As is the case among most savage peoples, war was a normal condition with the Comanches. For instance if expediency dictated that there be peace between the Comanches and Osages, the Texas

20. North American Indians, II, 73-74.
21. Parker, Notes Taken with Marcy, 195.
22. Exploration of the Red River, 97.

11: Casagrande E,L-5 (1940) 1954
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

657 The early reservation days were largely times of turmoil and discontent. Rations were often scant and inferior, schools and hospital facilities were inadequate, and epi-
657 demics were rife. Cattle-men from Texas
648 grazed their stock on reservation lands without payment or permission, and altercations between the Indians and U. S. troops were
657 frequent. In 1879 the agent, Hunt, instructed that each family should be located on a piece of land on which they were to remain, and no Indian was allowed to leave the reservation without military escort—an in-
648 junction that was often disobeyed. Long before the Territory was opened to the flood of White settlers in 1901 the influx of prospectors, squatters, farmers, missionaries, traders, gamblers, liquor peddlers, adventurers, and squaw-men had begun.

657 Sheep were issued in 1877 and 1878, but
231 there was no sale for the wool and, the Indians were said to have disliked them so much that the idea had to be given up.
241 Farming was begun in 1879, but the Indians'
492 teams were too weak to break the heavy sod and the plowing had to be done by
464 Whites who continued to be hired as farm-
361 ers. The first houses were built in 1877 and ten years later a number of churches were
136 erected. By 1880 the buffalo were gone and cattle had replaced them on the ranges.
434 "Grass money", paid by Texas cattle-men for grazing privileges, was instituted in 1885 and provided the chief source of
625 tribal income. The Indian police were or-
692 ganised in 1877 and in 1886 an Indian court was established and functioned until 1900.
657 Earlier, in 1872, the first of a series of joint delegations of reservation Indians went to Washington.

648 The ratification in 1900 of the "Jerome
657 Agreement" between the United States government and the Apache, Kiowa, and
178 Comanche Indians marked the end of reservation life and ushered in the modern
648 period. Under its articles the Indians ceded
423 their claims to the land formerly known as Indian Territory except one tract called "the Big Pasture", and each man, woman,

12: Canonge L-5 (ca. 1950-1955) 1958 NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

128 Canonge's translations, though simply presented, show the fruit of patient research into the manner of word formation, characterized in Comanche by a rich use of affixes and of stem composition, while still maintaining a fairly simple inflectional apparatus. Some of the facts were already worked out for Comanche and for closely related languages (e. g. Southern Paiute) before Canonge began his work, but he still had much to do to reach his present fine understanding of Comanche structure and the meaning of each element. He supplemented his general knowledge of the language by careful study of his texts, with the help of Mrs. Riddles and other natives.

The author is to be congratulated on his technique for showing the relation between the native text and the translations. He uses numbers for each word in the native text and marks with the same number the part of the translation corresponding to each native word. This gives a good correlation of the two texts without making the publication impossibly expensive, as is the use of interlinear translation. The linguistically skilled reader, by consulting some of the published work on the structure of Comanche or related tongues, will be able to analyze the material with relative ease; naturally the untrained reader will need more patience to follow the structure but not more than he would need with interlinear translation. A possible criticism is that the literary style of the translation is at times a bit clumsy for trying to parallel the native version strictly.

Canonge uses brief summaries rather than short-phrase titles to the texts. . This will be welcomed by the folklorist concerned with finding "folk-theme" parallels between Comanche and other mythologies, and by the general ethnographer looking for data on particular aspects of Comanche customs. The material is classified into parts, including: Coyote stories, Fairy tales and fables, Humor in ridicule, Manners and morals, Adventure, Obtaining and preparing food.

It is to be expected that the majority of readers will be interested in the content rather than in the specific linguistic form of these texts. They will be able to read right along, simply disregarding the little numbers used for showing the analysis. The latter will be important to the linguist and the student of native story-telling style.

492 175 In historic times, the Comanche distinguish themselves as one of the tribes which was quick to adopt the use of the horse, becoming accomplished riders, and using this rapid means of movement to hunt the buffalo and in exploits of war.

21: Burnet T-5 (1818-1819) 1954 NO6 Comanche NO6
Texas

[ca. 1818]

strip them in rude and vicious licentiousness. There are, 175
however, some instances of tenacious sensibility, sufficient 727
perhaps to redeem the species from this lamentable propensity to deterioration.

My next Letter will close the subject of the Comanchees.

B.

[*The Cincinnati Literary Gazette*, June 5, 1824]

Letter IV.

The Comanchees conduct all their military operations on 175
horseback. So exclusively are they habituated to the cav- 726
alry mode of warfare, that to place them on foot would be 492
in effect, to put them *hors de combat*, to render them totally inefficient. They are generally well mounted when on a hostile excursion, and are scarcely exceeded in the art of horsemanship, to which they are trained from early infancy. Both in war and hunting, they rely much on the 175
speed of their horses, and are careful to select for their own 492
use, the best and fleetest among their furtive herds.

The day previous to starting for war, the party militant 175
parade through the village mounted and accountred, and 726
bedaubed with paints, in their most gallant and frightful [714]
style. They march, or rather gallop in a line of single file, and have very few evolutions; but they contrive to give diversity and effect to their maneuvers, by frequent hideous yells, and antic gesticulations, which, combined with their wild and savage costume, give to the exhibition, if not a dreadful, at least a superlatively ludicrous appearance. Their habiliments on these occasions seem to be a motley assemblage of every rude and awkward device that can render their externals grotesque and terrific, or rather, to an informed spectator, fantastical and ridiculous.—A stranger might well imagine that he had gotten upon the parade ground of the Prince of Pandemonium: but an acquaintance with the real characters of the seemingly hideous spectres that shock and astound his vision, would convert the appalling spectacle into a scene of pantomimical foolery. These

21: Burnet T-5 (1818-1819) 1954 NO6 Comanche .06
Texas

175 [ca. 1818]
726 doughty warriors are much more terrible in appearance, than in reality; and such is generally the character of the southern Indians.

[492] They always set out on their predatory adventures to the provinces with two creatures; a mule or inferior horse to perform the drudgery of the journey, and their favorite war-horse, who is carefully led, and kept fresh, and vigorous, until arriving in the vicinity of the intended object of attack. The most wary circumspection is then adopted in all their [492] movements. A private encampment is formed, deep em- [593] bosomed in the forest, where the fatigue horses, with the saddles and other baggage are deposited, in charge of a few men, and perhaps women, who often accompany their husbands on their military excursions, and answer all the purposes of grooms and menials. The more daring warriors sally out under cover of moon-light, from this secret rallying point, to reconnoitre the neighboring settlement in quest of prey. They so regulate their departure from home as to arrive at the intended place of assault about the full of the
175 moon, and always make their attack at midnight. If they
726 succeed in capturing a drove of mules and horses, they drive
727 them with the utmost speed, night and day, until they cross
231 the Rio Grande, beyond which they are seldom pursued. They frequently drive off a thousand head of these animals at one time; but many of them are destroyed on the way by crossing water-courses, or worn out by fatigue and abandoned to perish; or should they revive, to herd with the wild horses, numerous gangs of which roam through the country, where a perennial verdure affords them an abundant subsistence.

175 The number of mules and horses that these Indians
727 capture annually from the Spaniards is immense, probably
231 not less than 10,000, and perhaps the one half of these are destroyed, or left derelict, in the hurry and tumult of the homeward march.

175 The warriors, when they venture from their hiding-
726 place, which they seldom do, except under favor of the
492 Queen of Night, either to reconnoitre, or make an attack,
714

21: Burnet T-5 (1818-1819) 1954 NO6 Comanche NO6 -
Texas

[ca. 1818]

always ride without saddles, and without any other encumbrance than the waist-cloth to their persons.—This lightness of apparel gives them a manifest advantage over their Spanish adversaries, whose horses are heavily caparisoned, and whose persons are embarrassed by a cumbrous load of accoutrements that partake more of the pomp, than the uses of war. Light shot guns, javelins, or lances, about 8 feet long, and bows and arrows compose their weapons. For defence they wear on the left wrist, a shield made of Buffaloes hide, consolidated when green by a process in which fire is the principal agent. They are made in an oval or circular form, about two feet in diameter, and presenting a surface slightly convexed. They are exceedingly tough, quite impenetrable to an arrow, and often so to the ball of a *scopete;* and they are light and easily disengaged from the arm in case of emergency. The loss of a shield does not attach an inexpiable disgrace to the character of a Comanchee warrior. They are comparatively novices in the use of fire-arms, and have an insuperable aversion to the weight of Rifles, but employ the bow and lance with great dexterity, and to a dispersed and retreating enemy, with destructive effect. The known capacity of their horses, and their minute acquaintance with the invaded country, which enables them generally to surprise the indolent and inert Spaniards, concurring with the miserable condition of the provinces for defense, inspire them with an artificial fearlessness, which invests them in the view of their ignorant and spiritless enemies, with the hideous horrors of the basilisk. But in truth, these horrors are imaginary: oppose them with decision and energy, and they will crouch like the Spaniel, or fly like the "stricken fawn."—They usually make what they term their grand campaign, once a year, either in the spring or fall season, when the three bands unite and co-operate in plundering and devastating the defenceless provinces that are contiguous to the Rio Grande. Besides these periodical invasions, the preparations for which, bear some resemblance to the pomp and circumstance of war, and the issues are frequently most disastrous to the exposed Provincials; there is a continual egress and

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

These young Indians had spent less time on horseback and more time inside, out of the weather; nor had they ever ridden the war trails. The women of this group took better care of their hair. The older women's hair generally had an untidy look.

This sullen aloofness and aimless drifting didn't affect the younger children—it seemed to set in when a boy got to be fifteen or sixteen years old. The younger children, when they arrived home on vacation, were bursting with energy. They rode their ponies helter-skelter over the prairies and rivaled the channel cat in Cache Creek with their cavorting, swimming, and diving.

They came to town with their parents—the girls riding in a hack or the little lumber wagon with the women. If it was the wagon, the bows and canvas cover converted it into a little prairie schooner. On a nice day the canvas would be rolled up a ways on either side, to let the air through.

Comanche men and boys never rode in the wagon or hack with the women. The boys would be riding along with their father, horseback. If there were not enough stock saddles to go around, the younger boys would be riding ancient Mexican-type saddles. These Mexican saddles had a flat look, compared to the up-to-date stock saddle. Neither the fork nor the cantle was as high, while the seat was broader. Its most distinguishing feature was the top of the fork. Thin, broad, and round, it made one think of a pancake. I am sure the tops of some of the horns were as much as four inches across.

Somehow, the youngsters always had a few nickels to spend for candy, cakes, and wax—their name for all kinds of chewing gum. The happy parents stood around and glowed in their pride. Sometimes the parents had one of the youngsters show off—they would have one of the boys interpret as they bought their groceries or other store items. They wanted everyone in the store to see how much their children had learned.

But all this youthful, happy exuberance suddenly vanished in the late teens. Few of the girls stayed in school as long as the boys, and the girls never got the good from their Carlisle clothes. About the second or third time they came to the store after their last year in school, they would buy some gay-colored, patterned calico along with matching cotton braid. The next time you saw them, they would be wearing a *pit-si-qui-na*.

The young men did wear out their white man's clothes, but seem-

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

set of tepee poles, twenty-two in number, left from the old days. 342
Now they were covered with canvas.

The government had built a small box house, generally fourteen 657
by twenty-eight feet, at most family camps, but it could hardly accom- 595
modate the multiple-wife family, still in vogue. Mostly it was the 343
camp's storage house, an out-of-the-weather place for saddles, harness, horse feed and medicine, and the women's sewing machine.

I almost never knew one of the Carlisle Comanches, man or boy, to 464
take a job. There were riding jobs on the ranches, and many mer- 461
chants would have been glad to hire a Comanche clerk. Old Indians with horse herds were forced to hire white broncobusters to break 492
their horses. I asked an Indian father once, in my ignorance, why he 464
was paying to have his horses ridden, and added the naïve qestion, "Don't your boys like to break horses to ride?" In our Scottish household I had never heard the words tact and diplomacy.

The old fellow gave a snort of disgust and replied, partly in sign language and partly in words, "They more like riding sitting-down-walking," that is to say, riding a bicycle.

The question had been crude on my part, and I should have been 000
pulled up short for my brashness. But I was all excited, thinking what a wonderful lot of fun it would be to gentle and ride those ponies. I had actually helped do it on the farm with wild horses from Oregon. I knew there was a better way to break a horse to ride than to throw a saddle on a wild horse, climb on, and spur him until he was exhausted from bucking.

Just a little time spent gentling a horse pays big dividends. Let him wear a saddle while he is tied snugly to a post or in a stall. Then, when you first ride him do not use your spurs. We first taught a horse to lead while wearing a saddle. Then, the first few times we rode him we had someone on a strong, gentle horse keep the wild horse's head snubbed close to the other's saddle horn and lead him.

Indian boys had nothing but time. Tribal custom had been to re- 462
quire no menial tasks from boys as they grew up: "Pretty soon be 857
warrior, may-be-so die." But in the old days, the boy was expected to 231
work with the horses, herd them, learn to train them, and become an expert horseman. From my observations, the Carlisle boys were inter- 492
ested in horses only when they wanted to ride somewhere. Had they seen fit to gentle and break their fathers' horses, they would have had much more salable animals.

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

camp functioning properly. The tasks were varied and time-consuming, and no one woman could have taken care of all of them.

The warrior-husband was the killer of game, the procurer of buffalo meat, the Comanches' principal source of food. He had to have two sets of trained horses—one trained for war, the other for the killing of buffalo. In either pursuit, his life was largely dependent on the horse. He manufactured both his riding gear and his weapons, and he trained his own horses. His fighting was practically on a twelve-month basis, since, though the Comanches did not like winter fighting, most of the ambitious warriors made raiding expeditions into Old Mexico when the group went into winter camp.

The husband, therefore, could be of little or no help around the camp, and the labor had to be divided among the women. Usually one of the women was an expert horsewoman and had the responsibility of her husband's horse herd, which often numbered a hundred or more. When the fall hunt was on for the winter's supply of meat, the wives did the skinning and butchering. They dried the meat and made the pemmican. Also, they prepared and tanned the hides. After the tanning came the making of clothing. This included everything the family wore, both in summer and winter. Since there was neither needle nor thread, the holes in the leather were made with a stone awl or one made from bone, and sinew taken from along the backbone of a buffalo or deer was used for thread.

Other hides were converted into robes for bedding or into covers for the tepees. When camp was moved, tepees had to be taken down and fastened on travoises, like all the other camp gear, and then camp must be set up again at the new location. All of this was strictly woman's work.

Somewhere, sometime, during breathing spells from all these duties, the women bore babies, nursed them, and raised them to be good Comanches. And all this was in a society without a recognized medium of exchange, in which no one could hire anything done. The Comanches did, however, utilize slave labor. Successful warriors furnished captive women to their wives for helpers. These captive women were given the opportunity to trade their slave status for wifehood, and captive girls were carefully trained to become Comanche wives. Captive boys were trained as warriors to fill the vacancies in the warrior ranks. In addition to members of other tribes, Anglos, Spaniards, and Mexicans were abducted to be made slaves.

32: Gilles . O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

slough and at some distance from the arbor. Brooms made from the native broom weeds tied tightly to a stick handle, brush end down, were used to sweep the arbor and cooking area scrupulously clean; and there were surprisingly few flies around the arbor. Generally shade was available, and the eating was done under the trees, away from the arbor. Wood, of course, was the fuel for the campfire.

When the time came for the really bad weather of fall, tents were pitched. Some families still had tepee poles and canvas covering for them. The buffalo-hide coverings had been gone for a long time when I arrived on the scene. The tents and tepees, together with the house, supplied the shelter needed in truly bad weather.

I have been in and around camps many times, and on occasion have even found it necessary to stay for the night. I watched the division of labor, seeking to find a clue as to who bossed whom. I never arrived at any satisfactory answers. Apparently the husband kept hands off, and the cooking area may have been out of bounds for him. At least, he stayed clear until the call for food. I never saw any of the women seek advice from the husband while the preparation of the meal was in progress.

There were exceptions, but at the home camp the husband usually corralled the horses and roped the ones to be used. Generally one of the women would come and help him harness or saddle up. Apparently the same wife helped with the horses each time. I was never aware of an order being given. When a family was in camp on the reservation for its Grass Money, the husband ordinarily cared for the horses.

At the home camp, one or two of the squaws would take a team and the wagon into the woods for the camp's wood supply. The squaws selected the down timber and chopped it into small enough pieces so that they could load it on the wagon to be hauled to camp. In one family group, this task was permanently assigned to a wife who had been so indiscreet as to give birth to a white baby. (The displeasure was not, however, visited upon the child. Not only was it treated just the same as the other children, but at times I was inclined to think it was actually the husband's favorite.)

I never saw anything to indicate that the first or oldest wife was necessarily the favorite one, nor was I able to tell which one of the women established the division of labor. A more trained observer than I might have secured more accurate information. In any event, of these things I am sure: there was a division of labor, and each wife

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

The women and girls rode in the wagon or hack, but the men and boys would be mounted on their finest horses. Their saddles and bridles would be polished, and each would be carrying a gaudy quirt. I got the impression that when the men and boys were put on parade like this, they belonged to the whole family of women and girls. At least, they would all be equally puffed up with pride; It wouldn't have done to have pricked any one of them with a needle.

I grew up in a society where we all had Sunday clothes put away for special occasions. But this Comanche custom of dolling up the men and boys carried a greater significance for them. It was of a ritualistic nature.

To sum up: contrary to the impression of inner family turmoil I had received from the accounts in the *Star* and the *Journal* of the workings of polygamy, the Comanche made it work. As far as the older Comanches were concerned, it had been and was an ideal arrangement.

To all appearances, everyone involved in the multiple wife setup—the husband, the wives, the children—was quite happy with it. I never observed a quarrel between wives. I never saw one wife mistreat another. Nor did I ever observe a display of jealousy in relation to either husband or child.

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

smiled. Even Charley's old father-in-law, Mi-he-suah, a veteran of many years on the People's war trails and one of the first casualities of the battle of Adobe Walls, let his face light up now and then with a happy smile; and Mrs. To-pet-chy, the sister-in-law, and her children smiled often. Smiling Comanches were rare, and when one saw a smile on the face of one of the old fellows, it seemed a bit of a miracle.

Charley's first job in Oklahoma was with the Chilocco Indian School. Next he worked for the Kiowa Agency at Anadarko. Then came the opportunity to work for Sam Burnett as a cowboy on the Burnett Ranch in Texas. Charley and Sam Burnett became good friends—the Burnetts, father and son, had the reputation of getting on well with the Indians—and while Charley worked on the ranch he also became acquainted with many other Texas cattlemen. Mrs. Cato especially remembers his having spoken of the Waggoners.

The Burnett Ranch occupied much of the land between Wichita Falls and the Red River to the north. Sam Burnett also rented grass from Quanah Parker on the north side of the river, and he was one of the Texas cattlemen and grass users who in 1884 built a house for Quanah on the bank of West Cache Creek, northwest of the present town of Cache, Oklahoma. When the Indian Department took over the leasing of the grass, Burnett continued his leasing until the country was opened for homesteading.

From Albert Clark, a half-blood Comanche employed at the Anadarko Agency, I learned that Charley Ross acquired his Anglo first name while he worked for Sam Burnett. Mr. Clark's parents had moved to the present town of Faxon, where they lived close to Charley, and as a lad Mr. Clark often talked to him. On one occasion Charley told young Albert the story of his name. One night, he said, the cowhands were all sitting around the wagon eating, when Sam Burnett called Che-appy to come and sit by him. He told Che-appy that he didn't like his name and was going to give him a better one. "From now on," he said, "your name is Charley Ross."

When I learned that Charley had worked as a cowboy for Sam Burnett, I understood something about him that had bothered me. I remembered Charley as a very graceful horseman, like all the Comanches, who sat their horses as if they belonged there and nowhere else. Charley had an extra grace, especially in his mounting and dismounting, which were done with an even flow of only the necessary movements. Perhaps the proper word is rhythm. But my mental pic-

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

ture of him always had him mounting his horse from the left side, white-man fashion; and his daughter, Mrs. Cato, says that my memory is correct. The Spaniards had been the Comanches' riding teachers, and because in Spain a horse is mounted from the right side, the Comanches mounted from the right. Charley Ross, however, learned from the Burnett cowboys to mount from the left. From them he also must have learned to train his saddle horse to the ground hitch, in which the rider drops his reins to the ground and the horse stands until the reins are picked up again. As far as I know, this is a cowboy trick.

Certain of Charley's physical characteristics, though they were especially evident when he was swinging on or off his horse, came not from his days on the Burnett ranch, but from his earlier years at Carlisle. A distinguishing feature of the Carlisle Indians, which Charley possessed, was their straight, long legs, which contrasted with the bandy legs of the warrior group. The old fellows showed the effect of a lifetime spent horseback. Also, Charley was typical of the products of the Indian boarding schools in being some inches taller than most of the Comanches of his generation or older, who ranged in height from five feet four inches to five feet six. Charley was five feet ten or eleven inches tall. The balanced diet the students at the schools received, the regular meals, the protection from the elements, and the smaller amount of horseback riding during the growing years probably account for the extra height of both boys and girls and the loss of the bandy look from their legs.

Though Charley was like the rest of the returning Carlisle students in these bodily ways, he was very different from them in his attitudes. It was as though the others shed the school years, and everything connected with them, and shoved it all under a log on West Cache. When they came into our store to make a purchase, they asked for it by its Indian name. They never uttered a word of English if grunting or pointing would get the job done. Nor would they interpret for us, even when it would be to the advantage of an older Indian. For example, one of the older Indians might have a check he had received for the sale of a horse or steer, but he would know nothing but what he had been told concerning its amount. We would be willing to cash the check, but we needed to know that the Indian was aware of the sum named in it. There might be a number of educated young Indians around, but it would be almost impossible to find one

32: Gilles O,X-3. (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

WHO WAS MO-CHO-ROOK?

IT WAS a hot, sunshiny Saturday in the late summer of 1902, and it was 000
the Saturday that they were holding horse races. They were white
man's races. That is to say, each horse owner had to pay an entrance
fee for any horse he wished to run in any particular race. This fee
money was added to the prize money the racing committee was offer-
ing on this particular race. In an Oklahoma Indian race, anyone could 541
enter a horse, and then everyone raced for the prize money.

A very old Indian, Mo-cho-rook, who owned two fine racing stal-
lions and always rode his own horses whenever he raced them, was
standing near the finish line, in the shade of a saloon building, holding
the reins of his large sorrel stallion. He was entered in a half-mile race,
on the straightaway track, and from a standing start.

When the call came for all horses in the race Mo-cho-rook had
entered to proceed to the starting line, the old Indian prepared to
mount. He was the focal point for all eyes. Most people, white and
Indian, knew he was very old, even if they did not know that the Co-
manche roll showed him to be seventy-seven.

He was small, possibly five feet two or three inches tall and weigh- 492
ing around 110 pounds. He always rode bareback. When, with his
hands on the sorrel's withers, he attempted to vault onto the horse,
it quickly sidestepped. Mo-cho-rook came down on his feet and did not [571]

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

lose his ballance, but the larger Indian boys, and some of the younger Indian mem, began to give him a bad time.

It was as though they had been waiting for him to make a mistake. They were telling him he was too old even to get on a horse, let alone ride one. Some of the remarks were much less polite and even ribald. The old Indian turned his angry gaze on them and spat out an invective that tended to silence them. What he said was not in my vocabulary, and I never learned what he called them.

Then he turned back to his horse, shortened up his hold on the reins, and vaulted completely over the stallion, landing lightly on his feet, and then vaulted onto the horse's back. Then he proceeded to the starting line and won himself a horse race.

I have stood near this horse's shoulders, and his withers were higher than my eyes—possibly as high as the top of my head, five feet ten and a half inches. In other words, this horse stood seventeen to eighteen hands high.

The old fellow was almost too fabulous to be believed in. As nearly as I was able to discern, he was already a Comanche legend, though he still lived. Mostly he was held in awe by the other Indians, especially by the younger ones. Maybe he was the bogeyman the elders threatened the children with. This one time was the only time I ever saw anyone try to take liberties with him. I doubt that those young Indians would have done so then but for the presence of many white people, U.S. marshals, and Indian police.

Almost any version of the story of the one-eyed man at the three-ringed circus could have been applied to me when I hit the Comanche country in the early days of March, 1902. I had had my fourteenth birthday in January. Everything was new. Everything was wonderful. I would not have changed a single thing.

Since I am Scotch, the love of the land is as much a part of me as the color of my skin or my hair. I am not trying to sound poetic when I say that the sweep of the grass-covered Comanche prairies was soul-satisfying. West Cache Creek, then the most beautiful of prairie streams, furnished the finest fishing and swimming that I have ever enjoyed, anywhere, any time.

There were wild ducks most months of the year, snipe, killdee, plover, doves, curlew, and some bobwhite for my gun. The young of a small variety of cottontail rabbits that lived in the prairie dog towns and were called prairie dog rabbits fell to my rifle. They were superior

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

vegetables, and seventy-five cents for smoking tobacco and sweets for the children.

Most Indian families lived in meager comfort if the head of the household neither drank nor gambled. Of course, Indians who were compulsive gamblers lowered their families' standard of living also. The gambler's family had a feast-or-famine existence at best.

There is this to be said for gambling money—much of it stayed in the tribe, while money spent for liquor was gone forever. It is easy to understand why decent people deplored the selling of whiskey to these wards of the government.

One recurring incident of Comanche drinking, however, became an amusing interlude to people living close to our store. It occurred in the little inland town of Faxon, Oklahoma Territory, and began immediately after the opening of Comanche land for homesteading in 1901.

The old couple involved in the incident have children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren living. Let's call the father of the family Old Warrior. He was one of the better-to-do Indians in worldly goods. He had quite a few horses, a few beef cattle, a good hack, a nearly-new small lumber wagon, and good harness, and the family as a whole owned several stock saddles.

But when Old Warrior and his woman came to town for whiskey they never drove. They would ride double on a little, fat, gentle mare, the kind of mount the Indians termed a squaw horse—meaning a safe horse for anyone to ride. It was on such a mount the little folks learned to ride solo. Instead of a saddle, Mr. and Mrs. Old Warrior rode on a blanket, folded so both could sit on it.

Of course the mount was a dead giveaway, as they only used the little mare when they came for whiskey. Another giveaway was that they would arrive in town near dusk, long past the time they would start for home when driving. The first year or two, when not drinking, they would take a roundabout road home. But on whiskey nights, their errand accomplished, they rode straight for home, point to point across the prairie.

Ordinarily they were a friendly family, and once their other errands were attended to, they made our store their stopping place. They always tied their horses to our hitchrack, if there was room. But when on a whiskey trip, they left their friendliness at home and never came to our store. Nor did they enter any other place of business.

For some time there was a vacant store building just to the east

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

157 Ca-vo-yo, who was one of the first of the old chaps to become an individual to me, was such a friendly, kindly old fellow that it was hard for me to picture him riding into battle, screaming his war cry. But by the agency's record he must have been a successful and respected warrior for approximately twenty years. Had he not been a [553] [555] successful warrior, none would have sought him out to name their man-child and give of his medicine.

778 [114] I have tried a number of times to write Ca-vo-yo's story as a giver of names, but the trouble always is that scarcely have you begun to write about the giving of a name, when you run into *Pa-haw-cut*, the Comanche name for medicine. And it is hard to tell a white audience about Comanche medicine, because the white man has nothing through which he can identify with the Comanche's feeling about it. I thought at one time of creating a straw man by combining an individual who by faith had a guardian angel with one who believed his destiny was directed by the stars and their positions, and then to this composite individual adding one who believed in luck—one who would not leave his home for the office of a morning without his good luck charm. Then I decided that the faith of even such an individual would still fall far short of a Comanche's faith in his medicine.

[555] When a Comanche warrior was bragging, to an audience gathered around a campfire, of some mighty coup he had brought about, he was not bragging of a personal exploit—he was telling about the 701 strength of his medicine. From the earliest war games he played as a boy, throughout his active adult life, he was constantly training himself to be ever a better warrior. It was his way of life. Also, he sought to perfect himself in the making of arms, both for war and for the hunt. Each warrior furnished his own arms. We have a written history, more or less, for the last 175 years of Comanche warfare, which shows that the Comanche possessed neither an armory nor a commissary.

492 411 224 Just as he had one set of arrows for war and another set of arrows he used in the killing of the buffalo, so the Comanche had horses trained for war and horses trained to carry him alongside the buffalo, 778 so he could loose an arrow into the rib cage of his huge quarry. But 726 492 it was his individual *Pa-haw-cut*, or medicine, that allowed him to count coup early and often in the battle—that caused his horse to carry him at full speed into battle and to carry him away in a stra- 778 tegic retreat. The same medicine allowed his horse to place him beside
492
224

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

the stampeding buffalo without stepping into a grass-covered badger or prairie-dog hole. 778 492 224

It was his medicine that enabled him to crawl into a cavalry bivouac and sever the eight-foot rope that each soldier had tied to his wrist, so his horse might graze safely during the night, and without waking the sleeper or his comrades lead the horse away. 778 726

It was his medicine that caused his wives to be friendly and congenial, one with the other. It resulted in the wives' caring for his camp, looking after his surplus horses, and bearing mostly boy babies. For none of these things did he take credit personally. But he was justly proud of his medicine that had brought all these things about, and he guarded it like a jealous lover. 778 [595] [842]

To sum up the attributes of a name-giver: he needed a keen ear and an extensive knowledge of the vocabulary—perhaps a sense of humor helped—and he must have a successful reputation as a warrior-hunter and a willingness to share his medicine. Custom required him to give each individual named a supply of his medicine. Warriors often refused to give a name because it meant parting with a portion of their medicine. They feared the remainder might prove inadequate. Apparently the true name-giver's supply had a similarity to the oil in the cruse and the meal in the barrel of the widow at Zarepath, while she fed the fugitive Elijah. It was replenished as used. 553 778 701 [555]

My reading indicates that the Comanche placed more emphasis or dependence on the name than did any of the other Plains tribes. A warrior might carry a number of names, should he live a long and successful life. In the event a boy developed into a sickly youngster, or was accident-prone, his parents were apt to seek out one reputed to have even stronger medicine than the one who gave him the first name and ask for another name. Directly after puberty when a youth went alone to fast and pray for a vision, should his vision have particular significance, he would be given a name in keeping with the vision. But no Comanche dared name himself. [171] [551] [881] [787]

After his acceptance as a warrior, should he develop outstanding characteristics in methods, strategy, or bravery, he might be given yet another name, descriptive of his accomplishments. For example, there was the Mexican captive Mo-cho-rook, about whom I tell in another chapter. Raised and trained as a Comanche warrior, he was given this name because "he so cruel, he makes Comanche blood run cold." He became a legend while yet he lived. 553 701 551

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

Its place was in the rear of the wagon bed. That way, if it leaked, it wouldn't damage the other merchandise.

The trip home took about six to seven hours. If the roads were muddy, it took longer. Dad was generally gone from home about fourteen hours, but the team had at least three hours to rest in Lawton. They couldn't make these trips day in, day out. We planned at least a day's rest between trips.

This particular morning Dad was ready to leave by the time I had the team hitched up, and I went in, hoping Mother had my breakfast ready. As I ate, she asked me if I had heard anything about Albert Martny's falling from a horse, catching his foot in a stirrup, and being dragged.

The Jim Martny family, one of the more prosperous Comanche families, was one of my own family's favorites. Jim was larger than most Comanches; many folks called him Big Jim. He was a multiple-wife Indian, and his favorite wife was the mother of two boys—Albert, then in his fourteenth year, and Earny, who was twelve. Jim's other wives' children were girls.

Indirectly, the way Mother learned about Albert's accident was that ours was one of the luckier towns—we had a doctor. Dr. McLain, just out of medical school, settled in our town with his young wife only a few days before we arrived. He built a combination office and residence across the street, and a bit east, from where Dad built our store building.

Mrs. McLain was expecting a baby before long; and when the doctor made an out-of-town call, Mother or Mrs. Cudyback, the wife of a saloonkeeper living directly across the street from the store, would sit with her. Occasionally Mrs. McLain would go to the Cudyback home or sit in our store until the doctor returned. The night before, both Mother and Mrs. Cudyback had visited with Mrs. McLain, and Mother was full of the story about Albert's accident. Mr. Cudyback picked up a good deal of gossip at the saloon he and his brother Will ran, and Mrs. McLain told what she learned from her doctor husband.

Jim Martny owned two well-bred racing stallions, and his other horses were of superior quality compared to the horses owned by most of his Comanche neighbors. I don't know how long Albert had been riding his father's horses in races, but early in 1902, when our town began holding races each first and third Saturday, Albert was his

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

father's rider. Comanche-fashion, the boy rode bareback to save the horse the additional weight of a saddle. He rode in his sock feet, as this helped him to grasp the barrel of the horse better. Many races were run from a standing start.

Comanches, who learned about horses from the Mexicans and Spanish, mount a horse from the right. (All horsemen of Europe except the Spanish mount from the left, and we Americans copy them.) This time Albert was using a stock saddle to exercise the larger stallion. The half-wild animal bolted as Albert started to mount. Albert fell, and his right foot caught in the stirrup.

The frantic horse dragged the boy, dangling from the stirrup, through the timber and underbrush of West Cache Creek bottoms for more than two hours before the father could rope it. They sent for the white doctor right away; but when Dr. McLain saw the boy's condition, he felt death was only a matter of hours, and the setting of the bones and cleaning of his wounds would only subject the boy to additional pain.

He left them a supply of morphine tablets to give the injured boy, should he regain consciousness before dying. This was quite in keeping with the practice of medicine at the turn of the century. Doctors passed out morphine tablets as though they were a new cough drop they were advertising. No other medicine, other than quinine, was in as great supply or as cheap. Most families had at least an eight-ounce bottle of laudanum on the pantry shelf. In addition to its value as a medicine for humans, amateur horse-doctors found it useful.

When Jim's wives learned through Earny that the doctor held out no hopes for Albert, they went into the death wail, even before the doctor could leave the camp.

The foregoing is practically all the community ever learned directly about Albert's accident and the events immediately following Dr. McLain's departure. The rest of the story must be told much as a prosecuting attorney presents circumstantial evidence to convict a defendant of a crime when there are no eyewitnesses.

With Dad away I couldn't leave Mother alone with the store, and the day following an arrival of a load of freight was always a busy one. Besides the team to be cared for and the trade to be waited on, there was merchandise to unpack, mark, and put on the shelves. On nearly every load there was a fifty-five-gallon drum of kerosene to be pumped into the store's container.

34: Ewers E-4 (no date) 1969 N06 Comanche N06
Texas

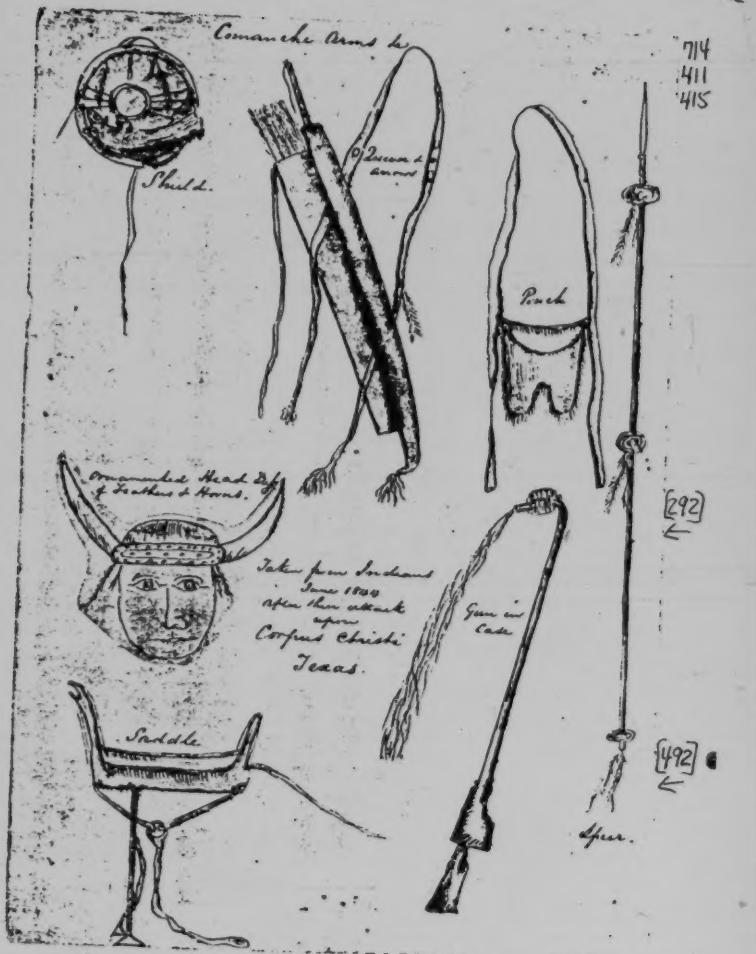

FIGURE 18. Weapons and equipment captured from a Comanche war party that raided Corpus Christi, Texas, in June 1844. Sketch by William Bollaert.

[p.169]